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AUG 7 1987

NEW YORK TIMES

The Celebrity Lecture Circuit

Shopping for Big Names and Fees

By BARBARA GAMAREKIAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 6 — Trailed by security men, Attorney General Edwin Meese 3d swept into a cocktail reception at the Metropolitan Club.

"Are you going out on the lecture circuit, too?" he was asked.

"No," he replied with a smile, "not for a while."

If he was engaging in a bit of advance career planning, Mr. Meese was in the right place, for the party was the opening event of a weeklong convention here of the International Platform Association that is "a sort of marketplace of the lecture platform," according to Dan Tyler Moore, director of the nonprofit association.

No one is more sought after on the celebrity lecture circuit than the Washington political personality, Mr. Moore said, so what better city in which to hold a convention?

North Could 'Name His Price'

If Lieut. Col. Oliver L. North decides to take up lecturing, Mr. Moore predicts, "he'll be able to name his price." He says that former Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger commands as much as \$20,000 a lecture, plus expenses, and that G. Gordon Liddy of Watergate notoriety makes \$1.5 million a year lecturing four times a week at \$7,500 an appearance.

It was Mr. Moore who put Mr. Liddy on the lecture stump, telephoning him at his home in Oxen Hill, Md., upon his release from jail. "I suggested to him that the Federal statute of limitations was five years," he recalled, "and that he should come over to our convention and tell his story."

During this week of banquets, luncheons, speakers and awards, such diverse personalities as Sydney Biddle Barrows, author of "The Mayflower Madame"; Stansfield Turner, former Director of Central Intelligence, and Dr. C. Everett Koop, the Surgeon General, have taken their turn along with 70 other speakers on the podium.

United States Trade Representative Clayton K. Yeutter discussed strategies for keeping America competitive; Dr. Koop talked about the AIDS crisis; Representative Mary Rose Oakar, Democrat of Ohio, lec-

tured on "Who's Watching the Fourth Estate;" Sarah Brady, wife of James Brady, the Presidential press secretary, discussed hand gun control; Secretary of Defense Caspar W. Weinberger was to share the honors with Phyllis Diller at a banquet tonight, and the television correspondents Andrea Mitchell, Bettina Gregory and Sam Donaldson all appeared.

Their audience is, in large measure, the program bookers for universities, foreign affairs councils, town halls and women's and men's clubs who are willing to pay the big fees that have made the lecture business a \$2 billion-a-year industry.

A hot topic on the circuit is the role of intelligence and counterintelligence in today's world.

"These recent investigations have created an enormous interest in espionage," Mr. Moore said. "There is a voracious appetite out there for the speakers who are going to tell them something they didn't know."

William Colby, former Director of

Central Intelligence, is sought after as an expert in this field, although he prefers to lecture on arms control, which he strongly advocates. ("The intelligence business has improved so much we don't have to trust the Russians, we can watch them," he says.)

Mr. Moore says the lecture business is "uniquely American," having sprung from the American Lyceum Association founded in 1831 by Daniel Webster and Josiah Holbrook. "They started lyceums all over the country," he said. "Every city, every little village and town had one, it was a cross-fertilization of ideas. Why, Dickens made more money on his American lecture tours than he made on his books."

He said he had expected television to wreck the lecture trade. Instead, the business has boomed. "Television," he said, "has created this tremendous appetite to sit next to all those people you see on the news, on the talk shows, to have them at your table, to see them in the flesh."

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